

A short variety jamun cultivation fetches good rewards

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Agriculture is a profession of patience. Apart from the time, labour and financial investment, passion is an important attribute to be successful.

“An optimistic attitude is what sets successful farmers apart from the usual herd. Because a method might fail once, twice or even several times, but the grit and determination to continue trying the same can prove to be rewarding after some time. Mr. C. Jayakumar a jamun grower from Dindugal is a good example of all this,” says Mr. N. Madhu Balan, Assistant Director, Agriculture, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Cultivated area

The farmer has been growing jamun in 1.5 acre (total area is 10 acres. Amla is cultivated in the remaining area) in Nilakottai taluk in Dindugal district.

Jamun trees usually reach a height of 30-35 feet and bear fruits for 60 to 70 years after planting. The farmer, through constant pruning for many years, has been successful in controlling the height of the trees to 18-20 feet.

“I tried to control the height of the tree by pruning them regularly because harvesting the fruits was proving to be difficult due to the height of the trees. The branches needed to be shaken well for the ripe fruits to fall down.

“While doing so either the branches broke or the fruits got damaged while falling on the ground and did not fetch a good price,” says Mr. Jayakumar.

The farmer purchased about 80 seedlings from a nursery in Andhra Pradesh and planted them at a spacing of 24 feet (8m X 8m). The trees were irrigated through drip lines.

After four years, flowering started and fruits set and yield was about 2 kg from each tree. Gradually the yield increased and at the age of eight years 40- 50 kg of fruits per tree were harvested. Now the trees are in the 11th year of planting and the farmer is able to harvest 60 kg of fruits from each tree.

Inputs

Only organic inputs like farmyard manure, bone meal, poultry manure, sugar mill press mud and bio fertilisers like azospirillum, phosphobacteria, vermicompost and panchagavya are used.

The fruits are collected in trays and delivered to departmental stores and several fruit shops. Each fruit weighs approximately 15 gm and tastes well due to organic inputs. The demand is quite good according to the farmer.

“Presently I am harvesting 50-70 kg fruits from each tree. I expect 4,250 kgs of fruits from all my 80 trees this year. The fruits are being sold at Rs.150 per kg and I am able to earn nearly a gross profit of Rs. 6 lakh in two months.

“The expense for manufacturing own organic inputs, harvesting, packing and transport works out to Rs. 1 lakh a year and I am able to realise a net profit of Rs. 5 lakh,” says Mr. Jayakumar.

Seedlings

The farmer develops jamun seedlings for others based on prior order. It takes 5-6 months to produce quality seedlings.

The expenditure for maintaining the tree is very low and Mr. Jayakumar suggests other farmers to try this out in their fields. He is ready to guide and offer his suggestions for those farmers interested in getting into this cultivation.

The farmer also underwent training at Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology in Thanjavur to study how value addition could be made for his amla fruits so that he could get additional remuneration. Accordingly, based on their suggestion, he set up a food processing unit in his farm to manufacture Amla juice, candy, squash etc.

Processing

“There is not much advantage in selling the fruits alone. Moreover it is season bound work. So I planned to combine food processing technique which generates remuneration all through the year. I buy organically grown amla fruits from my contacts if I happen to run short of fruits in my farm and continue value addition to them,” he says.

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